

LETTERS TO KATIE

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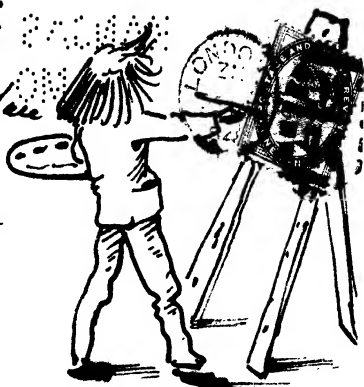
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
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THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

Miss Katie Lewis

88 Portland place

Regents park



Miss Katherine
Lewis

C/o Parkes.

Askley Cottage

Walton on Thames

Surrey.



LETTERS TO KATIE

BY

SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY

W. GRAHAM ROBERTSON

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1925

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE name of Edward Burne-Jones must call up visions of an enchanted land, remote yet familiar, where gracious shapes move slowly through blossom-decked meadows or dream beside still waters in lonely hollows of the hills.

A land of clear colour and stories,
A region of shadowless hours,

sang Swinburne when dedicating the firstfruits of his genius to his friend, and the description is apt and loving, though perhaps not quite a true one; for over that fair land ever hung the shadow of a beautiful sorrow, a sorrow all too prophetic of the passing of beauty from the world, a lament for dead days that will dawn no more.

Those who knew the painter only

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

through his pictures must regard him as a wanderer from some lovely, lost planet, weary and astray in this working-day world; yet to the few and fortunate honoured by his friendship another side was revealed, and this little book of letters and drawings raises a corner of the veil from that inner sanctuary of his mind.

There was about him a suggestion of the priest, more than a touch of the mystic, but his curious fascination lay greatly in his unexpectedness: the saint would suddenly slip off his halo and become a lively and delightful sinner; yet neither attitude was a pose, both were equally natural and convincing.

If a marriage could have been arranged between Brother Francis of Assisi and Monna Lisa, or if Puck had eloped with Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, their offspring might conceivably have been very like Edward Burne-Jones.

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A delicate and impish sense of humour peeped out shyly from many of his earlier pictures, such as "Saint Valentine's Morning", certain panels of the Frideswide designs, and "Love disguised as Reason", but from his later work it was rigidly excluded and may therefore come as a surprise to some of his warmest admirers.

Perhaps because of this repression, his private sketches for home consumption grew more and more joyous and untrammelled as the years went on: indeed I remember a projected series of imaginary Portraits of Prominent Women being suppressed by the home authorities after the appearance of the first batch—the prominences were so unlooked-for and arresting.

Pigs as a source of inspiration never failed, though he once complained to me when certain bogie drawings had been found a little too stimulating for his

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

young grandchildren. —“ They say I mustn’t draw Devils or ‘ Things ’ for Angela any more. It seems a pity, as I am sure she would like them and I’m so tired of Pigs. Yet, if one may not draw Devils, what is left but Pigs? ”—

However, his granddaughter was soon reported bogie-proof and he launched forth in the highest spirits upon a new and blood-curdling gallery.

“ I *may* draw drefful things for Angela now,” he announced, and hurried back to a sketch-book whose pages already faintly shadowed forth *The Mist Walkers* and *The Heath Horror*.

He was always drawing; design seemed to flow from his fingers almost without thought or effort. Once, while talking to me, he took up a little pocket-book and sketched absently as he carried on the conversation. As I left him he gave me the book, which contained the careful drawing of a sleeve and falling

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

draperies, a half-fledged bird, a cat with tail erect stalking the same, a fat baby, and a highly imaginative drawing of Noah's Ark with rain and rainbow complete.

His slightest sketch always beautified the page, there were no failures nor erasures, never was he seen to scribble. The lovely line flowed on, rhythmic and unerring; and, on that Great Day when all sketch-books shall be opened, I am inclined to back those of Burne-Jones and Leonardo da Vinci against the world.

Of the drawings now published ~~what~~ is there to be said? They explain themselves, and, did they not, the delightful letterpress fills in all blanks.

Only the portrait of " Parkes " has but little text. He looks lonely, and I remember a Burne-Jones tale of " Parkes "—either this " Parkes " or another.

Enter briskly this (or another) " Parkes ".

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

—" Please, sir, your Aunt Nellie."

—" *My* Aunt Nellie? "

—" Yessir."

—" But I haven't got an Aunt Nellie."

—" No, sir? Gave that name, sir."

—" But—what have you done with her? Where is she? "

—" Ran straight up to the studio, sir."

The artist bounded upstairs, fearing he knew not what, and found—blandly resolving himself into a state of innocence—Antonelli, the male figure model.

Burne-Jones wrote, as he drew, with light, delicate touch: these tiny letters to the tiny child are masterpieces.

He had formed the habit of making pictured stories for his own children, he had grown to need the criticism and collaboration of a baby; and the "Katie" of these pages came to his aid when he was in a babyless void, his own nursery empty, his grandchildren still undreamed of. And the child, "Katie", youngest

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daughter of most valued friends, was a worthy recipient of the artist's bounty. Quick and precocious, generously endowed with her father's wisdom and her mother's wit, she had, at the ripe age of four, that keen appreciation of the comic side of things which led Burne-Jones to recognise a kindred spirit. His own children, even that "Margaret" whose beloved figure is always tenderly treated in his most indiscreet moods, were beginning to put away childish things: he wanted another baby to amuse, and "Katie" turned up in a happy hour.

We owe her a debt of gratitude in that she has preserved her treasures and is now allowing us to share them with her.

W. GRAHAM ROBERTSON.

SANDHILLS, WITLEY, SURREY.

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Reproduction of two of the envelopes in which the letters were sent through the post	<i>Frontispiece</i>
2. "a sort of boy with a bow and arrow"	<i>To face p. xvi</i>
3. "I drew him like this"	" 1
4. "it is too easy, i told her so—i drew it right off"	" 2
5. "There that is just like it"	" 3
6. "leaving me this to copy"	" 4
7. "I am taking lessons in dancing"	" 6
8. "She taught me a polenska to-day"	" 7
9. "I lost all my shyness and danced really finely"	" 8
10. "dress as I do here in London"	" 9
11. "or put myself into a good tailor's hands"	" 9
12. "I bought myself a new hat"	" 10
13. "my new hat had been blown overboard"	" 11
14. "I saved a cat and a dog yesterday"	" 12
15. "Margaret says I may share her cat"	" 13
16. "I have lost my half of the poor cat"	" 14

ILLUSTRATIONS

17. "Where do you think I found my half of the pussy?" . . .	<i>To face p. 14</i>
18. "Her pussy would still look very nice and so should I" . . .	„ 15
19. "The female pig was so fat and lazy that she fell asleep at the very door of the ark" . . .	„ 16
20. "Do you remember my pig? well —it has had ten little ones" . . .	„ 17
21. "they were very nice, they took a long time to eat" . . .	„ 18
22. "This is my impression of your parnty" . . .	„ 19
23. "The city gentleman and the Welsh rabbit" . . .	„ 20
24. "I also have got a 'Parkes' he is like this" . . .	„ 27

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LETTERS TO KATIE

•



a sort of boy with a
bow & arrow - he
~~wasn't~~ good or quick

III

he fidgetted : I drew
him like this



she said it was done
badly and wasn't
like . i think it
was very like . but
of course I shall
improve when i

I

THE GRANGE,
WEST KENSINGTON, W.

My dear Katie

i hope you are quite well. i am quite well. i have been learning to draw all day. Mrs Art teaches me. it is very difficult, she brought somebody with her for me to copy—the person looked like this a sort of boy with a bow and arrow—he wasn't good or quiet he fidgetted: I drew him like this

She said it was done badly and wasn't like. i think it was very like. but of course I shall improve when i am older. i cant do it all right at once—that isn't to be expected—any more than you could or dolly car.

i am your refectionate

Mr. beak

II

THE GRANGE,

WEST KENSINGTON, W.

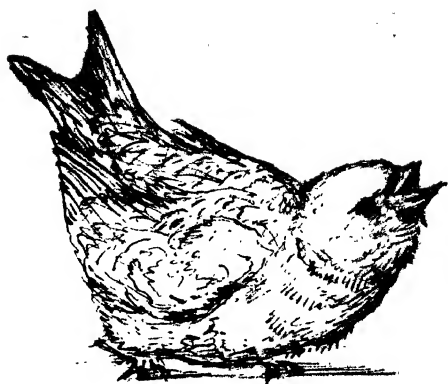
My dear katie

i am quite well. Mrs Art wouldnt let me draw that boy any more, she says i must begin with easier things and take more pains she brought me a bird to draw from it was like this it is too easy, i told her so—i drew it right off at once. she says i dont give my mind to it and it isn't true for i do, ever so much mind, i hate copying things i like to draw out of my head dear katie please ask your mama if she could go on Monday instead of Wednesday to see the big picture

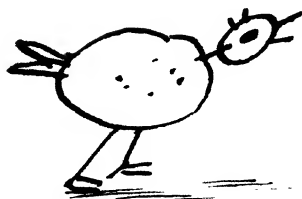
i remain

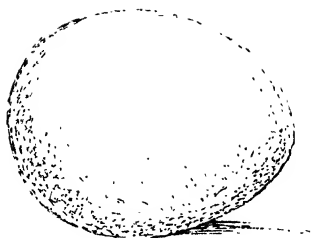
your 'fectionate

m^r beak



it is too easy, i
told her so - i
chew it right off





There that is just
like it - and she
says it isn't - and

III

THE GRANGE
WEST KENSINGTON,
W.

dear Katie

*She has set me down to draw the egg of
that bird I couldn't draw—it is too easy
There that is just like it—and she says it
isnt—and it is. I wont draw any more if
she says I dont do it well.*

*I hate to be teased in that way—I wish she
would give me something more difficult to
draw. round things are too easy—I am so
cross i am*

*yourefectionate
mr beak*

IV

My dear Katie

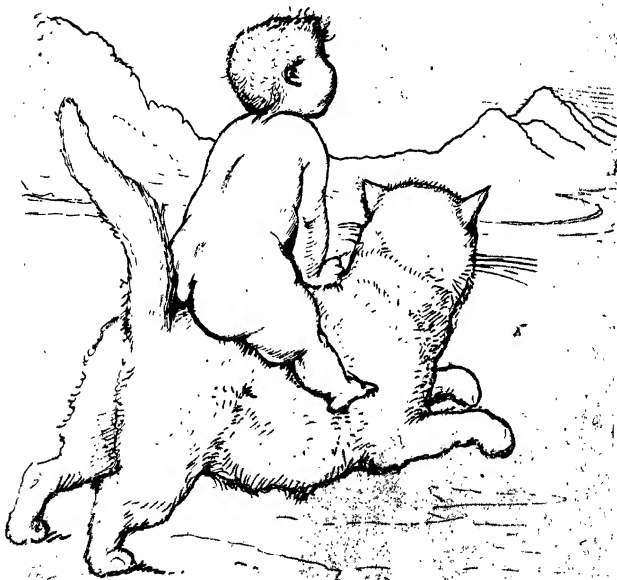
I want to know if the Donkey is quite well : because he is a relation of mine—a sort of half brother but by different parents. and as I was the humble means of introducing him at Portland place I should like to know about him, and whether Parkes and he get on—or if Parkes only gets on.

I want to be at Walton it is much prettier than London—the roses are bigger and the river is cleaner—and you have Madamosel that we haven't—and many advantages, such as Parkes—and a mama not to be compared with the trifling mamas we have.

but you havent a rocking horse I know—one must come to London for that.

dear Katie—I have given up drawing—I cannot learn—it is much too hard and my Madamosel has gone away. leaving me this to copy. I am certain I shall never copy it if I live 1000 years and she is to come back in seven years to see what I have done.

given up drawing - I cannot
learn - it is much too
hard and my madamesse
has gone away. leaving
me this to copy.



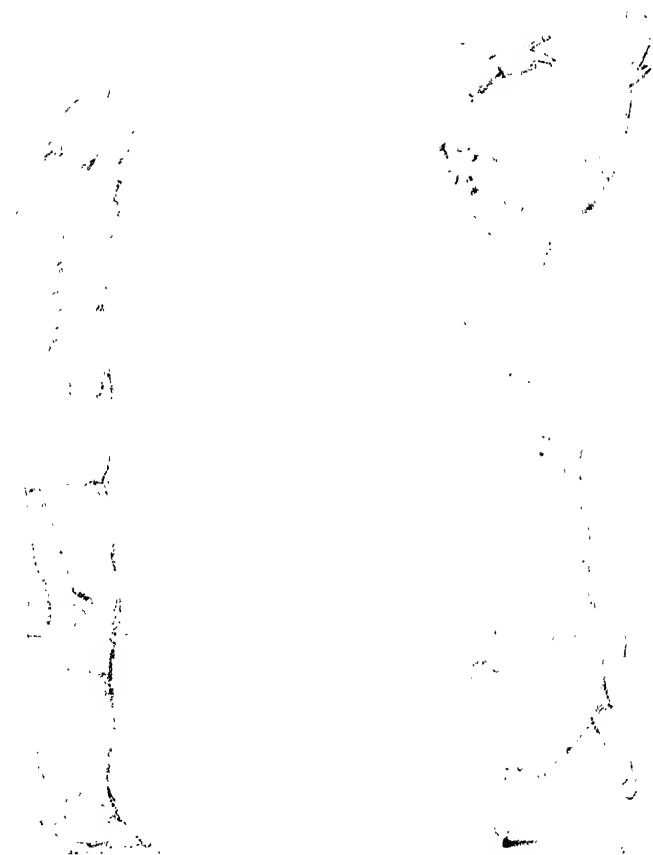
I am certain I shall never

*Give my love to Parkes and Gertie and
your mama and papa and Georgie and
Therese and Alice if she has come back and
the donkey and the waggonette and every-
body and everything and*

I am

your affectionate

Mr. beak



VI

THE GRANGE,
WEST KENSINGTON, W.

My darling Katie

*I have had my second dancing lesson
Margaret says I have more freedom now
and am getting on nicely—but she says I
mustnt let my slippers fall off and I cant
help it*

*She taught me a polenska to-day and
tomorrow I am to learn a jigska. I hope
you are quite well as it leaves me at present
I am*

Your affec^{te}

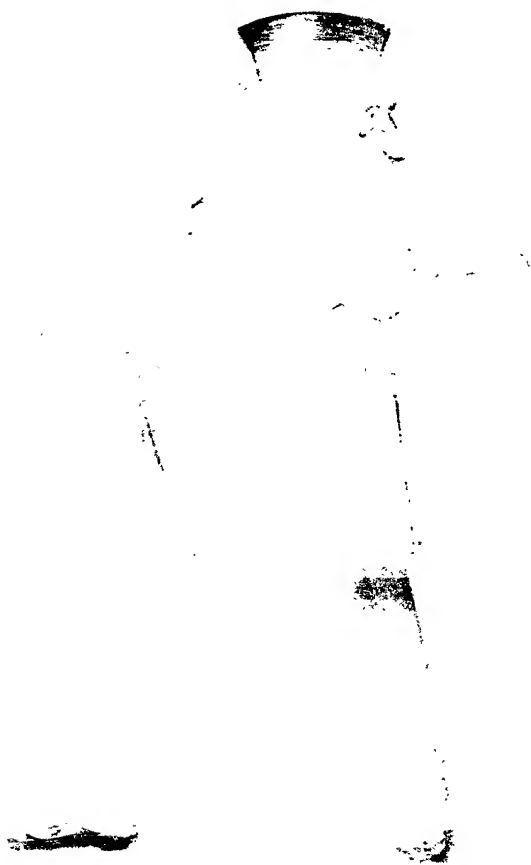
Mr beak

7

4



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VIII

THE GRANGE

WEST KENSINGTON, W.

dear Katie

please ask your Papa which he would like best when he takes me to Paris, for me to dress as I do here in London, as in picture No. 1—or for me to put myself into a good tailor's hands and appear as I do in picture No. 2. whichever he would like best I will do. and we are going to have a real nice time in Paris

now I must conclude

I am

dear Katie

Your affectionate

Mr. beak

please give my love to your Mama and papa and Alice and Gertie and Madamosel and Dolly and Therese and Parkes and the people you meet and especially the Donkey Goodbye.

IX

THE GRANGE

WEST KENSINGTON, W.

My dear Katie

Your papa and i came back on friday from such a delightful time in Paris.—I want you to thank him for me for giving me such a treat—we got up very late every morning and then had some chocolate, and then lighted our cigars and strolled up and down the Rue Rivoli looking in shop windows. I never saw such pretty things as were in the shops. I bought myself a new hat I hope you will like it. I thought it very pretty, & more stylish than any I see in London. It is usually worn in the late afternoon. it looks very delightful seen from the back. Your papa's was not such a good one as mine—it was very serviceable but had no style. Neither was Mr. Carr's at all equal to mine—we walked a great deal up and down a delightful place called the Boulevards. people looked at my hat a great deal.

I bought myself a new hat
I hope you will like it - I thought
it very pretty, & more stylish
than any I see in
London.



it is usually worn in the late
afternoon

it looks very
delightful seen
from the back.



Your papa's
was not

such a good one as mine - it
was very serviceable but had
no style - neither was Mr. Barr's;

mustard, for which I was too
 vessel to be able to hide my
 grief - so I didn't call. I
 hear it has landed at the
 side of high - much damaged -
 but it was a very handsome
 one



Your affectionate
 Mrs. Heath.
 Will send five my message to you

Katie! there were streets that had none but sweetmeat shops in them—!

Others that only had shops full of dolls.

The sea was very rough, and I thought rude, as we came back, and I was too unwell to present myself at Clifton Gardens. also my new hat had been blown overboard, for which I was too vexed to be able to hide my grief—so I didnt call. I hear it has landed at the isle of Wight—much damaged—but it was a very handsome one

Your affectte

Mr. beak

mind and give my message to your papa—& tell him I shall never forget Judic in that charming play.

X

THE GRANGE
WEST KENSINGTON,
W.

dearer Katie

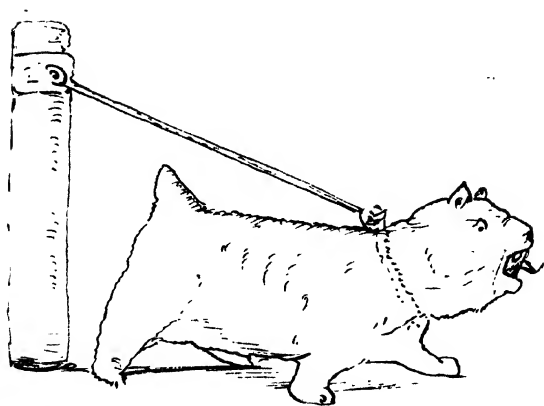
I am quite well. I hope you are quite well:

I saved a cat & a dog yesterday when it rained cats & dogs and mean to rear them. Margaret likes them very much—they are like this.

Please turn over

I am your affectionate

Mr. Beak



*I am your affectionate
Mr. Beak.*

XI

THE GRANGE WEST KENSINGTON W

dear Katie

*Margaret says I may share her cat
just like you and Gerty share Nig.*

I am to have the tail end if I am good.

*I may go out with my bit on Sunday, but
must bring it safe home, and I will for it is
very kind of her*

*I suppose your bit is called NIG and
Gertie's naturally is called GER*

I am your affely

Beak

XII

THE GRANGE
WEST KENSINGTON
W.

Dear katie

i have lost my half of the poor cat.

Margaret is very angry with me.

She has put me in a corner, but it isnt the corner where I lost my half.

She has to cover up the end of her half with an apron.

if she doesnt let me come out of the corner how can i find my bit.

dear Katie

i remain

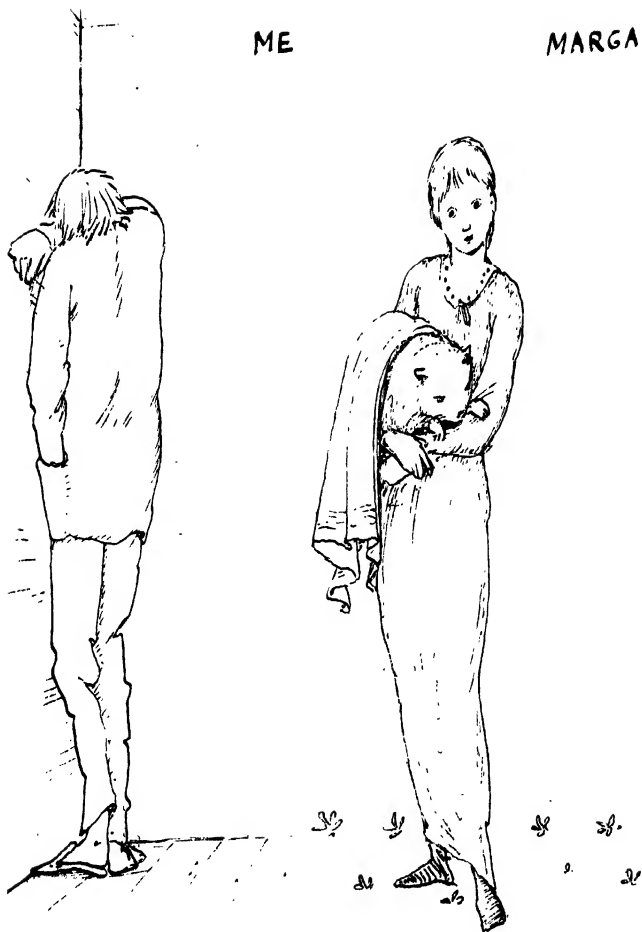
Yours affectionately

Mr. beak.

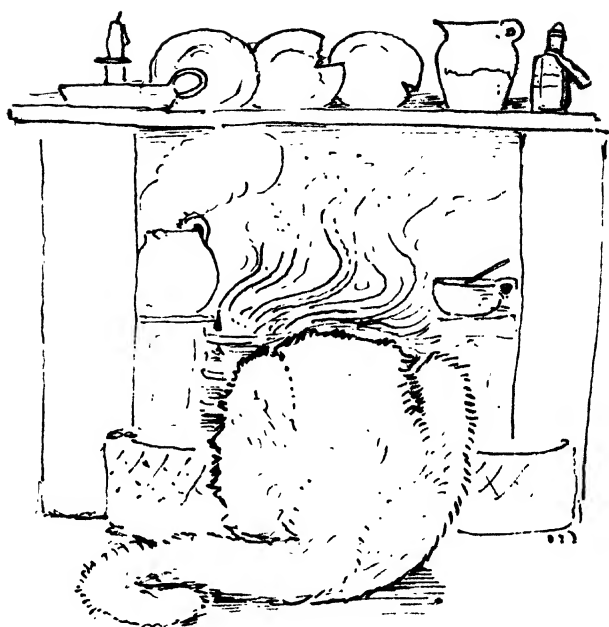
i can't help being angry with people when they are careless. it might so easily have been avoided. M[argaret]

ME

MARGA

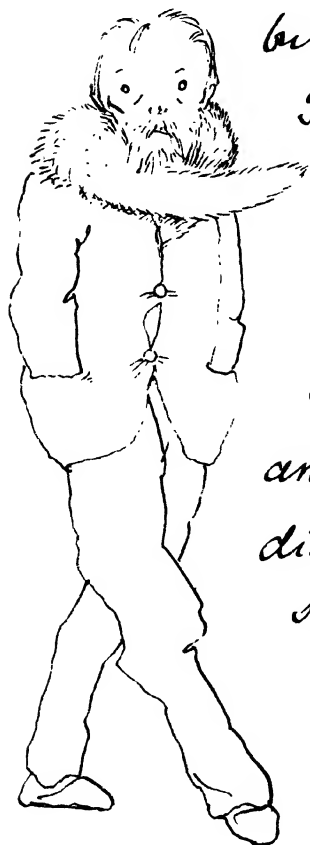






and so should I.

and it would keep me
warm.



but Mar-
garet
isn't
kind
to me.

and i
am your
discon-
solate

mr
be-
ak

XIII

THE GRANGE
WEST KENSINGTON
W.

Oh ! dear Katie—

*Where do you think I found my half
of the pussy ?*

*At the kitchen fire after all, warming
itself and now Margaret has put the bits
together, and wont let me play with it
anymore*

*I dont think thats very kind. she might
let me have the tail and her pussy would still
look very nice and so should I. and it would
keep me warm. but Margaret isnt kind to
me, and i am your disconsolate Mr beak*

XIV

ROTTINGDEAN

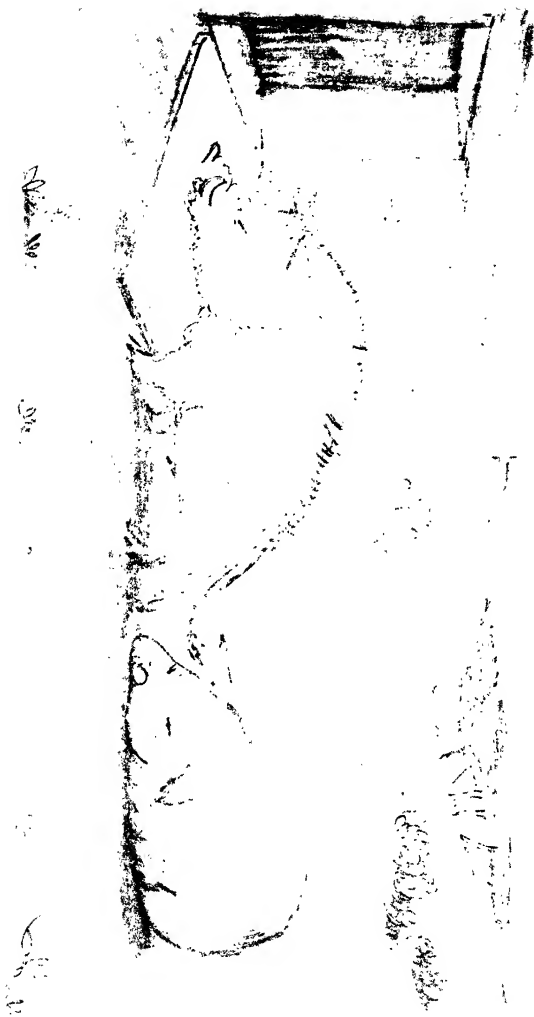
My dear Katie

When those beasts and birds walked up to the ark they wouldnt let the pigs go with them because they thought them nasty. they didnt even want them to be saved in the ark—which was unkind. So I have drawn them for you separately, because they went last. and the female pig was so fat & lazy that she fell asleep at the very door of the ark, and was nearly drowned—if she had been drowned we should never have had eggs and bacon at Walton, which shows that we ought not to judge hastily.

dear Katie you shall sit where you like when you are learning lessons.

and i am

your affct^d M^r. beak





XV

THE GRANGE,
WEST KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Katie

*Do you remember my pig? well—
what do you think? it has had ten little
ones—and i dont know if they are scarfs
and i dont know what to call them
and each must have a name—and i dont
think there are ten names in the alphabet
and they all want winding up like their
mama—and squeal if they are not wound up
—and it takes such a time—their names
will be*

- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| 1. Smith | 6 Friday |
| 2 Jezebel | 7 Piccadilly |
| 3 Dinah | 8 Patience |
| 4 Bill | 9 You |
| 5 Winder | 10 Me |

i am your affecte

Mr beak

XVI

THE GRANGE,
WEST KENSINGTON,
W.

My dear Katie

i have been wishing myself a Happy Christmas all morning, and i should like you to have some too.

i had a nice breakfast. do you remember my pigs? the old one and the twelve little ones—no ten little ones. well i had them made into pies.

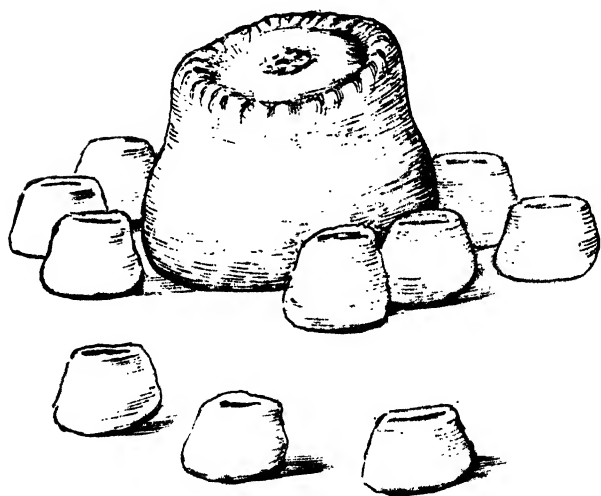
they were very nice they took a long time to eat, and Margaret helped me: at first i didn't want her to have any, but afterwards i didn't mind. it will soon be dinnertime there will be plum pudding and mince pies.

Good bye dear Katie—if you see a robinred breast give him my love and some crumbs

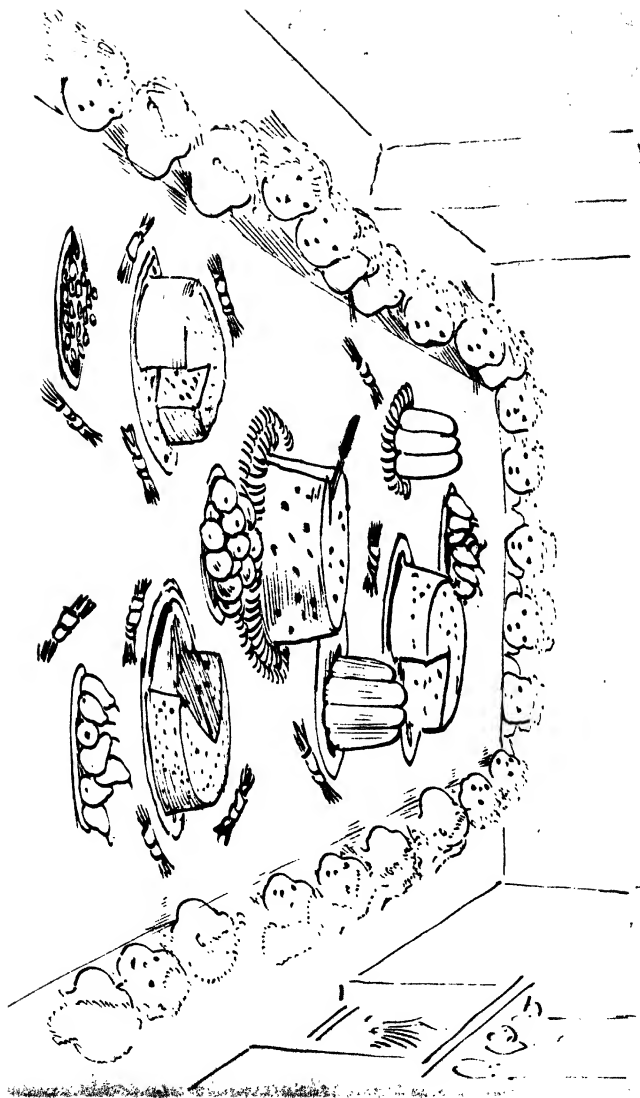
Your affectionate

Mr. beak

they took a long time to eat, and Margaret helped me: at first i didn't want



her to have any, but afterwards i didn't mind.



XVII

THE GRANGE,
WEST KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Katie

This is my impression of your parnty last week—I may be wrong—but I merely say it is my impression.

it may be a wrong impression—it may be hastily formed—it may need revision—any suggestions or corrections you may make will be listened to with deference

I cannot promise to change my impressions; it may be that they are too firmly fixed in my mind—but for what they are I offer them for your consideration.

The remaining 84 babies I could not get in—they are left to the imagination. I am

Your aff.

Mr. Beak

XVIII

THE GRANGE, WEST KENSINGTON, W.

My dear Katie

I send you a picture of the person who counted his chickens before they were hatched—if you ask your papa he will tell you that story—it's a very long one—but the person himself was very short as you see its a good story.

So is the story of the cat with nine tales—that takes a long time to tell—your mama knows it—all the tales are very pretty—I can find no picture about it anywhere. but if you like to order some, they shall be got.

But here is a picture of "the city gentleman and the Welsh rabbit" a capital story which your papa tells beautifully. And indeed it is a most laughable story, as you will find when he tells it you.

Now dear Katie I must conclude—and I wish you many returns of the day, though I know it isnt your birthday.



Ah you dont know who dined with me last evening can you guess?

it was Oscar

Give my love to your mama and your papa and Alice and Gertie—& when you write send my compliments to M^r. Parkes—and the story of Parkes and the Walton rabbit is even funnier than that about the Welsh rabbit & I am your affe^e

Mr beak

XIX

THE GRANGE, WEST KENSINGTON, W.

My dear Katie

Once there were two birds—a mama bird and a little girlbird. both very soft & nice and each was much softer than the other.

One day the mama bird in the most innocent way wounded the over acute sensibilities of the little bird.



if you ask Miss Dolbishoff she will tell you the meaning of the words "acute" and "sensitivity" I dont know what they mean. Then the little bird said these memorable and painful words

I WILL NEVER FORGIVE YOU
the elder bird wept.



But see what happened !

*Every day the little hardhearted bird lost
one feather.*

*in a week's time it was like
this*



*in a fortnights time it was
like this*



*in three weeks time it was like
THIS*



*and in one short months time
it was once more a simple
egg and was boiled and put
in a cup, and eaten for
breakfast*



*So goodbye my dear little Katie and this is
a true story*

from yrs affect^e

Mr. beak

XX

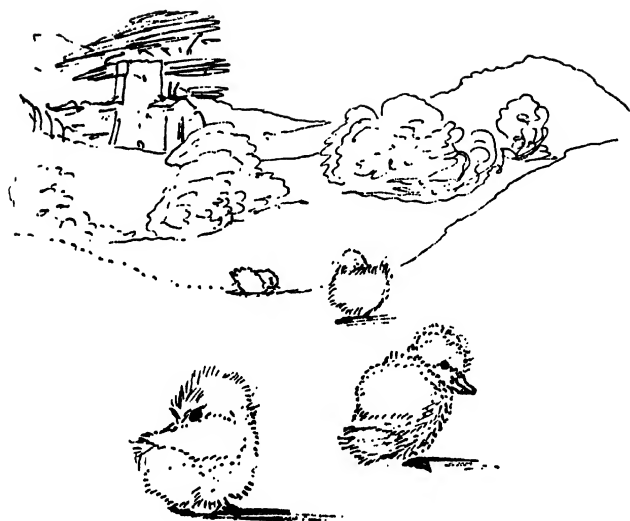
THE GRANGE,
WEST KENSINGTON, W.

dear Katie

Will you, please, give a message to your mama from me—asking her at the same time, not to speak to anyone about the matter, which is a profound secret at present. Indeed I hardly think I am right in speaking of it even to her—the message is as follows

you see at once, dear, that if this is mentioned aloud it might be very unfortunate—I don't think it would be well to let Gertie know about it, because of her bird that might be jealous.

There is also a little secret I should like to whisper into your ear, which you must



*never tell—and it is this and dont tell this
even to your mama.*



dear Katie, good night I am going to bed.

Your aff^{te}

B.

The Grange,

West Kensington,

W.

Dear Nattie

I also have got a
"Parker" he is like this



I am your affectionate M. Break

XXI

THE GRANGE,
WEST KENSINGTON,
W.

dear Katie

*I also have got a " Parkes " he is
like this*

I am your affectionate M^r. Beak

NOTES

Letter No. I. page 1 :

The Grange, West Kensington, was Sir Edward Burne-Jones's house in London.

My dear Katie. Miss Katherine Lewis, youngest daughter of the late Sir George H. Lewis, Bt., to whom the letters in this volume were written.

Mr. Beak. The name by which Miss Katherine Lewis called Sir Edward Burne-Jones.

dolly car. Miss Dorothy Comyns Carr.

Letter No. IV. pages 4 and 5 :

Portland Place. 88 Portland Place was Sir George Lewis's house in London.

Parkes. The butler at Portland Place.

Walton. Ashley Cottage, Walton-on-Thames, was Sir George Lewis's country house.

Madamosel. The French governess.

Gertie. Miss Gertrude Lewis, Sir George Lewis's second daughter.

Georgie. Sir George Lewis's son, now Sir George Lewis, 2nd Bart.

Therese. The German maid.

Alice. Sir George Lewis's eldest daughter.

Letter No. V. page 6 :

Margaret. Daughter of Sir Edward Burne-Jones, now Mrs. Mackail.

Phil. Son of Sir Edward Burne-Jones, now Sir Philip Burne-Jones, 2nd Bt.

NOTES

Letter No. VIII. page 9 :

Sir Edward Burne-Jones pretended he had accompanied Sir G. Lewis and Mr. J. Comyns Carr on a visit to Paris, which occasioned this and the following letter.

Letter No. IX. pages 10 and 11 :

Mr. Carr. J. Comyns Carr really went to Paris with Sir G. Lewis.

Clifton Gardens. The house at Folkestone Sir G. Lewis had taken for the summer.

Judic. The French actress.

Letter No. XI. page 13 :

you and Gerty share Nig. Nigger was a dog belonging to Gertrude and Katherine Lewis.

Letter No. XV. page 17 :

Do you remember my pig? Sir Edward had a mechanical pig—a toy which wound up.

if they are scarfs. A joke about Miss Katherine Lewis calling a calf a scarf.

Letter No. XVII. page 19 :

your parnty. A joke because Miss Katherine Lewis called a party a parnty.

Letter No. XVIII. page 21 :

it was Oscar. Oscar Wilde.

Letter No. XIX. page 22 :

Miss Dolbishoff. The Russian governess.

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